

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 PC-10 DRC-01 EB-11 COME-00

OMB-01 AGR-20 MC-02 ACDA-19 TRSE-00 /216 W

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R 281025Z JAN 74 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1570

INFO AMEMBASSYADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USINT CAIRO

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0123

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJ: SOMALI-ARAB RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT SIAD HAS COMPLETED A WELL-PUBLICIZED THREE-WEEK TRIP TO SEVEN ARABIAN PENINSULA COUNTRIES, COMMENCING WITH OFFICIAL PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA, AND SOMALIA APPEARS TO BE SEEKING ADMISSION TO ARAB LEAGUE. SOMALI EFFORT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ARABS REFLECTS NEED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND INCREASED EXPORT MARKETS AT TIME OF RISING PRICES FOR OIL AND OTHER IMPORTS. IT ALSO REPRESENTS ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE INCREASED ARAB MORAL DZD MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR SOMALIA'S ARCH-RIVAL, ETHIOPIA. EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH CON-
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SERVATIVE ARAB OIL COUNTRIES SHOULD HELP URGE SIAD TOWARD

REDUCED GSDR EMPHASIS ON SOVIET TIES, LESS RADICAL SOCIALIST POLICIES WITHIN SOMALIA AND MORE BALANCED STAND ON WORLD AFFAIRS. IT THEREFORE SEEMS TO US AS ON BALANCE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, ESPECIALLY AS WE DOUBT THAT IMPACT OF NEW SOMALI OVERTURES WILL MATERIALLY AFFECT ARAB POLICY TOWARD ETHIOPIA. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT SIAD LED DELEGATION OF 20 SENIOR GSDR OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THREE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SRC, FONMIN OMAR ARTEH AND FIVE OTHER CABINET MEMBERS, ON WELL-PUBLICIZED TRIP TO ARABIAN PENINSULA FROM DECEMBER 28 TO JANUARY 19. (ARTEH LEFT SIAD GROUP IN MID-JANUARY, AND IS NOW TOURING OTHER ARAB CAP-ITALS.) TRIP BEGAN WITH OFFICIAL NEW YEAR'S PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA AND TEN-DAY VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA. SHORTER VISITS FOLLOWED TO ABU DHABI, QATAR, BAHREIN, KUWAIT, OMAN, AND SOUTH YEMEN. SOMALI MEDIA REPORTED AT GREAT LENGTH BUT CARRIED LITTLE HARD NEWS OF WHAT HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. MUCH SPACE GIVEN TO FACT SIAD SPOKE TO LOCAL SOMALI COMMUNITIES IN COUNTRIES VISITED, WITH REFERENCES TO ACHIEVEMENTS OF REVOLUTION IN SOMALIA.

3. SOMALI NEWS MEDIA ANNOUNCED THAT GSDR WOULD ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH QATAR - PRESUMABLY WITH NON-RESIDENT AMBASSADORS. (THREE ARABIAN PENINSULA COUNTRIES CURRENTLY HAVE AMBASSADORS IN MOGADISCIO: SAUDI ARABIA, NORTH AND SOUTH YEMEN. KUWAIT HAS NON-RESIDENT AMBASSADOR.)

4. MEDIA ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT DELEGATION FROM KUWAIT WOULD SOON BE VISITING SOMALIA, AND IN FACT DELEGATION LED BY DIRECTOR GENERAL KUWAITI ARAB FUND ARRIVED MOGADISCIO JANUARY 26. ALSO, SOMALI OFFICIAL NEWS BULLETIN TWICE CARRIED QUOTATIONS FROM CAIRO NEWSPAPERS ABOUT SOMALI INTEREST IN JOINING ARAB LEAGUE, INDICATING GOVERNMENT SANCTION FOR CURRENT INTENSE SPECULATION IN SOMALIA ON THIS SUBJECT.

5. COMMENT: PRESIDENT KEEPS IN HIS OWN HANDS MANY OF DETAILS OF GOVERNMENT AND HAS HAD SOMETHING LESS THAN TOTAL CONFIDENCE ABOUT HIS OWN POWER POSITION, AND HE HAS BEEN QUITE SELECTIVE ABOUT HIS FOREIGN TRAVELS. LENGTH OF HIS TRIP AND FACT HIS ABSENCE OCCURRED AT TIME WHEN REGIME CONFRONTING NUMBER OF DIFFICULT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ATTEST TO IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO WOOLING OF SAUDI ARABIA AND GULF STATES.

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6. SOLICITATION OF ARAB AID FOR SOMALI DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF TRADE ARE DOUBTLESS AMONG PRIME SUBJECTS ON SIAD'S MIND. GSDR ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE OF OIL STATES AS POTENTIAL SOURCES OF AID (ONE THAT SOMALIS HAVE HAD ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS IN TAPPING IN PAST, IN CONTRAST TO FLOW FROM MOST OTHER SOURCES) IS ENHANCED BY SOMALIA'S DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION, (AGGRAVATED BY HIGHER OIL PRICES) INCREASED REVENUES FOR ARAB

OIL PRODUCING STATES AND RECENT SIGNS OF THEIR GREATER WILLINGNESS TO HELP AFRICAN NATIONS, E.G., ARAB DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR AFRICA. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, SPECIAL EFFORT TO TAP THESE RESOURCES MAY HAVE MADE SENSE TO SIAD. ALSO, ARABIAN PENINSULA CURRENTLY RECEIVES TWO-THIRDS OF SOMALI EXPORTS, MAINLY LIVE ANIMALS, PLUS A SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITY OF BANANAS, AND GSDR DOUBTLESS HOPES FOR FURTHER EXPANSION OF MARKETS IN AREA.

7. PRESIDENT SIAD WAS PROBABLY ALSO SEEKING TO DISCOURAGE ENHANCED ARAB MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR ETHIOPIA IN WAKE LATTER'S SEVERANCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND SUBSEQUENT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ARABS (ADDIS 684). SIAD'S TASK COMPLICATED BY FACT ETHIOPIA LARGER, MORE POPULOUS AND RICHER THAN SOMALIA, ITS RULER MORE PRESTIGIOUS, AND ITS GEOGRAPHIC POSITION MORE IMPORTANT FOR ARAB PURPOSES. ON OTHER HAND, SIAD HAS HIS "FELLOW MUSLIM" CARD, WHICH HE PLAYED

UP BY BEGINNING HIS TRIP WITH PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA. (IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING GOOD PRELUDE TO TALKS WITH FAISAL AND OTHER TRQDITION-MINDED ARAB RULERS, PILGRIMAGE CONSTITUTES DEMONSTRATION TO SKEPTICS AT HOME AND ABROAD THAT GSDR'S "SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM" IS NOT RPT NOT IN CONFLICT WITH ISLAM.)

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 PC-10 DRC-01 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 AGR-20 MC-02 ACDA-19 OMB-01 /216 W

----- 118413

R 281025Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1571

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 MOGADISCIO 0123

8. TRIP MAY ALSO BE PART OF SOMALIA'S CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO GAIN APPROVAL FOR ITS ADMISSION TO ARAB LEAGUE (AS PRESUMABLY IS FONMIN'S TRIP TO OTHER ARAB CAPITALS). NUMBER OF FACTORS SEEM TO HAVE LED GSDR TO DECIDE TO PUSH ITS CANDIDACY. PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT IS DESIRE TO KEEP ONE JUMP AHEAD OF ETHIOPIA VIS-A-VIS ARABS; THUS ETHIOPIAN BREAK WITH ISRAEL NECESSITATED AN ADDITIONAL FORWARD STEP BY GSDR. FURTHERMORE, MEMBERSHIP IN LEAGUE GIVES SOMALIS ADDITIONAL FORUM FOR ADVOCACY OF SOMALI SIDE OF DISPUTE WITH ETHIOPIA. ALSO IMPORTANT WOULD BE PRESUMABLY GREATER CLAIM ON ARAB ECONOMIC AID WHICH LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP WOULD ENTAIL. ANOTHER FEATURE WOULD BE COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES - SUCH AS REDUCTION OR ABOLITION OF TARIFFS - WHICH WE UNDERSTAND FLOW FROM ARAB LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP. THIS WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL FOR DESIRED EXPANSION OF SOMALI EX-
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PORTS OF BANANAS AND MEAT.

9. GSDR HAS IN PAST TWO YEARS MADE DETERMINED EFFORT TO FORGE CLOSER RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS OF AFRICA AND TO IMPROVE ITS CREDENTIALS WITHIN AFRICAN CLUB. HOWEVER, MOVEMENT OF BLACK AFRICAN STATES OVER PAST FEW MONTHS TOWARD CLOSER CO-OPERATION WITH ARABS HAS PROBABLY REDUCED SOMALI FEARS AS TO EXTENT THAT JOINING ARAB LEAGUE WOULD WORK AGAINST CLOSE AFRICAN RELATIONSHIPS AND DIMINISH OAU MEMBERS' SUPPORT FOR GSDR DISPUTE WITH ETHIOPIA.

10. FACT THAT PRESENT REGIME HAS BEEN IN OFFICE OVER FOUR YEARS AND THAT IT HAS SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCED A SCRIPT OTHER THAN ARABIC FOR ITS NATIONAL LANGUAGE MAY HAVE GIVEN SOMALIS - WHO HAVE TAKEN PRIDE IN ANCESTRAL AND RELIGIOUS TIES WITH ARABS, BUT HAVE INSISTED ON UNIQUENESS OF THEIR OWN CULTURE - NEW CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WOULD NOT JEOPARDIZE SOMALI AFRICAN IDENTITY BY JOINING LEAGUE. FURTHERMORE, EXAMPLE OF MAURITANIA MAY HAVE PERSUADED GSDR THAT ADMISSION TO LEAGUE COULD BE OBTAINED WITHOUT UNDUE DIFFICULTY .

11. GSDR MOVE TOWARD ARAB NATIONS WILL HAVE SOME POSITIVE RESPONSE WITHIN SOMALIA. THERE ARE SEVERAL WITHIN RULING GROUP, INCLUDING SRC, WHO HAVE CONSISTENTLY FAVORED CLOSER ARAB TIES. SUCH TIES WILL ALSO BE WELCOME TO SOME CONSERVATIVE AND RELIGIOUS SOMALIS WHO OTHERWISE UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PRESENT

SOCIALIST REGIME. MANY WILL WELCOME MOVE AS EVIDENCE INCREASED STATURE SOMALIA IN WORLD AFFAIRS.

12. CLOSER SOMALI RELATIONS WITH ARABS HAVE DISADVANTAGE FROM US POINT OF VIEW OF POSSIBLY BLUNTING ETHIOPIA'S ENDEAVOUR TO IMPROVE ITS OWN RELATIONS WITH ARAB STATES (ADDIS 684). IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO JUDGE IMPORTANCE OF SOMALI MANEUVERING IN THIS CONNECTION IN COMPARISON TO OTHER, MORE BASIC FACTORS, SUCH AS ETHIOPIA'S GREATER IMPORTANCE, CONSENSUS AGAINST BOUNDARY CHANGES WITHIN OAU, AND DYNASTIC ARAB RELUCTANCE TO UNDERMINE A NEIGHBORING MONARCHY. IN SUM, WE DOUBT THAT IMPACT OF NEW SOMALI OVERTURES WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO SHIFT ARAB POLICY TOWARD ETHIOPIA. WE HAVE NO INDICATION ARAB STATES WOULD ENCOURAGE SIAD IN EXACERBATION OF TENSIONS IN HORN, MUCH LESS IN USE OF MILITARY FORCE TO PURSUE SOMALIA'S FEUD

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WITH ETHIOPIA.

13. BETTER SOMALI-ARAB RELATIONS ALSO HAVE THEORETICAL DISADVANTAGE OF MAKING SOMALIA MORE WILLING TO ASSIST ARABS IN ANY FUTURE CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL. YET SOMALI PORTS ON GULF OF ADEN ARE PRESUMABLY ALREADY AVAILABLE TO ARABS IF THEY WISH TO USE THEM IN SUPPORT OF BLOCKADE OF RED SEA. SOMALI MILITARY FORCES ARE OF LIMITED SIGNIFICANCE IN THE CONTEXT AND WOULD HARDLY BE DIVERTED FROM ETHIOPIAN FRONT IN ANY CASE. ONLY OTHER ASSISTANCE SOMALIA HAS TO OFFER IS PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT AND LIVESTOCK - BOTH OF WHICH WERE PROFFERED DURING OCTOBER WAR.

14. ON POSITIVE SIDE, CLOSER RELATIONS WITH CONSERVATIVE ARAB STATES SUCH AS SAUDIS AND GULF STATES WOULD BE FACTORS WORKING TOWARD REDUCTION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN SOMALIA. PRESUME THAT SIAD WAS ADVISED BY HIS ARAB CONTACTS TO BEWARE OF SOVIET MACHINATIONS, LECTURED ABOUT INCOMPATIBILITY OF ISLAM AND COMMUNISM, AND URGED TO ACT MORE LIKE AN INDEPENDENT MUSLIM STATE THAN A SOVIET CLIENT. TO EXTEND SIAD GETS INCREASED PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT FROM OIL-RICH ARABS, HE MAY REDUCE EMPHASIS ON SOVIET TIES, THOUGH BASIC GSDF INDEPENDENCE ON

SOVIET ARMS WILL REMAIN. IT WOULD APPEAR REASONABLY EXPECT THAT CONSERVATIVE ARAB STATES WOULD URGE SIAD TOWARD BETTER RELATIONS WITH US RATHER THAN THE REVERSE. SOMEWHAT MORE BALANCED GENERAL STAND BY GSDF IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MIGHT RESULT.

15. FURTHERMORE, RELATIONSHIP WITH CONSERVATIVE ARAB STATES SHOULD HELP MOVE SIAD TOWARD LESS RADICAL SOCIALIST POLICIES WITHIN GSDF. ARAB ECONOMIC AID COULD ALLEVIATE SERIOUS ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS HERE AND THE RESULTING PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE ON LEADERSHIP, THUS HELPING TO MODERATE TEMPERAMENTAL DECISIONS BY GSDF AND, IN LONG RUN, SHOULD ASSIST IN EFFECTING ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT OF ONE OF WORLD'S POOREST COUNTRIES.

16. IN SUM, CLOSER SOMALI RELATIONS WITH ARABS, ALTHOUGH
HAVING NEGATIVE ASPECTS, WOULD APPEAR AS ON BALANCE POSITIVE
DEVELOPMENT FROM US POINT OF VIEW, AND ONE WE SHOULD THEREFORE
NOT ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MOGADI00123
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: MOGADISCIO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740112/aaaaakqz.tel
Line Count: 283
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 APR 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <05-Sep-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOMALI-ARAB RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, SO, EG, (SIAD BARRE, MOHAMED)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005